

Appl. No. 10/676,552
Amdt. Dated May 5, 2005
Reply to Office Action of March 22, 2005

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants' attorney wishes to thank Examiner Elve for her courtesy in granting a recent interview during which the structure and operation of the machine tool installation of the present invention was discussed as were the distinctions between the present invention and the considerable prior art.

The Examiner readily appreciated the advantages to having a single drive mechanism for movement of the motion unit and which, by coupling and uncoupling, could also function to operate the transport mechanisms for the loading a workpiece and unloading the machined workpieces.

With the loading and unloading units uncoupled, the motor has less weight to move and less inertia to overcome. This is significant during the laser cutting operation. However, that some drive mechanism can be utilized to move the loading and unloading units, either singularly or in combination when so desired. This assembly defined by the claims in the present application is certainly not disclosed or suggested by any of the prior art.

Smyth certainly does not have a motion unit as defined in Applicants' claims and it certainly does not have coupling elements to engage loading and unloading units to be driven by such a motion unit. It is a typical bridge-type laser cutting installation.

Puozzo et al Patent No. 4,851,637 does not have loading or unloading stations and certainly does not have any coupling means on the movable arm 6.

Klingel certainly does not disclose or suggest the present invention since he also shows a bridge-type laser cutting installation with no coupling elements to effect the motion

of loading and unloading units. Serruys does show loading and unloading equipment, but these are separate units which are not coupled to the movable laser cutting head.

Thus, none of the prior art relied upon by the Examiner (or cited) discloses or suggests the novel structural assembly defined by Applicants' claims.

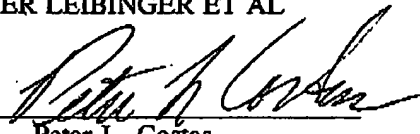
As pointed out at the interview, Miyakawa et al Patent No. 5,192,848 which was cited by Applicants discloses a traveling unit 5 upon which is mounted a common frame 6 which in turn carries a loader 7 and an unloader 17. However, the laser processing unit is independent of the traveling unit and the laser processing is carried on with the workpiece traveling unit moved out of the range of operation of the laser cutting unit. Thus, the traveling unit does not effect any motion of the laser during cutting.

It is respectfully submitted that the amended claims clearly define a novel and unobvious machine tool installation for laser cutting of sheet workpieces, and early allowance thereof is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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